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THE MONTHLY GULL BULLETIN

AUDUBON ASSOCIATION OF THE PACIFIC

VOLUME 6 SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, JANUARY, 1924 NUMBER 1

JANUARY (7th ANNUAL) MEETING: The next regular meeting of the Association will be held on Thursday evening, 10th inst., at eight o'clock, in the Assembly Hall of the Public Library, corner McAllister and Larkin Sts. Take elevator to third floor. Car lines No. 5 or No. 19.

Annual reports will be presented and officers and directors elected for the coming year.

Dr. Casey Albert Wood, F. L. Z. S., Assoc. Mem. A. O. U., will deliver a lecture on the subject of "A Naturalist in British Guiana." The Association has for a long time been anticipating the pleasure of welcoming Dr. Wood, after a protracted absence in England, South America and Australasia and the business of the meeting will be abridged so far as possible to enable those in attendance to enjoy his account of a fraction of his wanderings and the lantern slides which he accumulated therein. Visitors will be made welcome.

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JANUARY FIELD TRIP will be taken, as usual, to Lake Merritt, Oakland, on Sunday, January 10th.

San Francisco members will take Key Route boat at 9 a. m., and Grand Avenue car on 22d St. train at the mole, leaving car at Perkins Street and Grand Avenue, where the party will form at 9:45 a. m. and proceed to the duck enclosure on the near-by lake shore, in order to witness the feeding of the wild ducks at 10 a. m.

East Bay members transfer from any main line to Grand Avenue or Lake Shore Avenue cars, leaving cars at the above mentioned point.

Trestle Glen is rapidly being built up, but a pleasant supplementary walk can still be taken through the district, which has always afforded acceptable habitat for numerous land species of bird.

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE DECEMBER MEETING: The eighty-third regular meeting of the Association was held on December 13th, in the Assembly Hall of the San Francisco Public Library, with President Kibbe in the chair; Mrs. Carl R. Smith, Secretary; ten members and four guests in attendance, despite the extreme inclemency of the weather.

The business session was confined to a discussion of the McIlhenny project for the establishment of a shooting club between the two largest bird reservations along the Louisiana coast, and of the prospective revival of the Public Shooting Ground - Game Refuge Bill in Congress. Mr. Lastreto reported correspondence with National President T. Gilbert Pearson on the

McIlhenny project, and was requested to secure further information from other sources. Mr. Lastreto was also requested to address all California Representatives, thanking those who voted for the Public Shooting Ground bill last session and requesting their continued advocacy of the bill, and also defining the attitude of the Association to those who opposed or failed to vote in favor of the bill and urging them to reconsider their former action.

The feature of the evening was furnished by Dr. Joseph Grinnell, Honorary Member of the Association, in the form of a talk upon "Some of our Less Familiar Sparrows". It was noted that forty eight full species of sparrow occur in California and that bird censuses of any considerable area will generally show about 50% to 60% of members of the *Fringillidae*. About half of these species are smallish and dull colored and must be sought and scrutinized with discrimination. More particular stress was laid upon the following eight species:

1. Rufous-crowned sparrow. Crown reddish-brown, but not prominent. Upper parts grayish brown, streaked; lower parts, light and not streaked; no spot on breast; tail small in proportion. Non-migratory; resident everywhere within its range. Not gregarious; scattered with an average density in its habitat of one pair to five acres. Affects sunny slopes, with dry, sparse, low chaparral, 24-30 inches high, toward tops of bare hills. Prefers *Artemisia Californica*. Has a weak, high-pitched song, with an infrequently given call resembling that of a crow in the distance. In September, 1901, the speaker, with Chester Barlow found them in considerable numbers near the school on the road between Milpitas and Calaveras dam site. The bird builds its nest in a depression in the ground, under a little *Artemisia*, laying three or four plain white eggs.

2. Bell sparrow. Upper parts, olive-brown; ashy on head; tail, black. Under parts, white, with slight streakings on sides that become aggregated into prominent maxillary stripes; black blotch on breast; small spot like tuft of cotton just above each eye. Permanent resident and breeding throughout its range. Shows preference for *Adenostoma;* perches on tips of branches. Builds its nest 5-20 inches above ground, laying four pale blue eggs with lavender markings. Its song may be represented thus: *twee citity slip—twee citity slip—twee citity slip—swir.*

3. Sage sparrow. Similar to preceding, but paler and larger; maxillary stripe, obscure; shows something like a double streak along side of throat. Affects *Artemisia tridentata*, and has a habit of dropping to ground and running along, with up-tilted tail.

4. Brewer sparrow. Resembles a chipping sparrow, without crown colors, and has a narrower tail. It has occurred near Redwood City and in Marin county; around Fresno in winter and in the vineyards throughout summer; commonest sparrow in Death Valley in April; affects sparse brush; migratory and gregarious, groups of forty being found near Furnace Creek Ranch; has a weakness for bathing; addicted to congregational singing, and groups like the above, in full song, produce an effect like a bedlam of canary songs in a bird store.

5. Swamp sparrow. Like a song sparrow above, but with no breast-spot and not streaked below. Brown crown, more or less reddish; ashy-gray of sides of head and neck spreads all over breast and under parts, fading to whitish on throat and belly.

This bird has been recorded only once in California, west of the Sierra, and the circumstances are interesting from several standpoints. Some time ago, a group of Italians were detected in the act of netting birds near Holy Cross Cemetery. 133 little victims were found in their possession and were turned over to the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology. There were found among

them: 62 Nuttall, 38 song, 16 golden-crowned, 2 intermediate, 2 fox and 4 Lincoln sparrows; 4 San Francisco towhees, 1 dusky and 1 Audubon Warbler; 1 Vigors wren, 1 bush-tit and this one Eastern swamp sparrow. Five beautiful silk nets of fine mesh were confiscated and fines amounting to $450 were imposed upon the culprits.

6. Lincoln sparrow. Very like song sparrow, but more slender and not "perky". Buffy chest-band with chest streakings finely pencilled. Nests in the Sierra but visits Berkeley during the winter. Has been found along path on east side of the University bleachers.

7. Harris sparrow. Top of head, throat and chest, black. General effect is that of a golden-crowned sparrow without golden crown and with some black on throat and chest. Has been observed along Mosswood Road in Berkeley and in Haywards.

8. White-throated sparrow. Readily distinguished from the white-crowned sparrows by its pure white throat, and, at closer range, by small spot of bright yellow between bill and eye. This bird occurs as a frequent straggler west of the Rockies; observed occasionally during the winter almost anywhere in this vicinity and one or two are found on the campus every year.

To the great regret of those present, Dr. Grinnell was compelled to abridge his talk and the meeting adjourned after an inspection of the specimens used for illustration, with sincere appreciation of the entertainment and instruction afforded.

CENSUS OF BIRDS' NESTS IN THE MUSIC CONCOURSE
Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, California, For 1923.

Previous reports in Gull, January, 1920; February, 1921; March, 1923.

In accordance with the custom established by the Department of Ornithology of the California Academy of Sciences, the annual census of the birds' nests built during the year in the music concourse in Golden Gate Park was taken in December, 1923.

While some early rains had dampened the nests and had caused some of them to show signs of decay, the long-continued dry period that followed the rains preserved the majority in very fair shape. Most of the leaves having fallen from the trees, and conditions being favorable for this work, the count was made on December 5th. The total number of nests found (and destroyed) was 56, this being just one less than the number noted at the time of the first census, 1919.

The counts now stand as follows: 1919, 57; 1920, 89; 1921, no count made because a heavy gale had blown away most of the nests; 1922, 25; 1923, 56.

The histories of these nests of 1923 were about as follows, as nearly as could be judged from their appearance at the time of securing and counting them: brood raised, 20; containing evidence of having been robbed, 12; eggs laid but nest deserted, 2 (in one of them, however, a brood had first been raised, after which three eggs had been laid and then the nest deserted); apparently finished but unused, or else robbed without disturbing nest, 3; commenced but unfinished, 9; in such a condition as to make it impossible to arrive at any satisfactory conclusion, 11; total, 56.

Of these the largest number of nests appeared to be those of the California Linnet (*Carpodacus mexicanus frontalis*), with 26; next came Nuttall's Sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys nuttalli*), with 18; English Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), 4; Western Robin (*Planesticus migratorius propinquus*), 2, both of which were robbed; Willow Goldfinch (*Astragalinus tristis*

salicamans), 1; Greenbacked Goldfinch (*Astragalinus psaltria hesperophilus*), 1; Western Chipping Sparrow (*Spizella passerina arizonæ*), 1; not identified, 3.

In the cases of robbery the thieves without doubt were the fox squirrels introduced in the park, and which are notably increasing in numbers.

JOSEPH MAILLIARD
California Academy of Sciences.

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DECEMBER FIELD TRIP was taken on Sunday, the 16th, to Golden Gate Park. The day was windy and cold. While the sun was bright, the ground was wet. The water birds were well represented on all the lakes, the land birds were but scantily in evidence, comparatively few different species and few individuals of any species being observed, and among those missed were some of the commonest birds of the park.

The ring-necked ducks have sustained a notable delegation on the Chain-of-lakes for the two months past, in addition to representatives in widely scattered locations in this vicinity. On October 7th, a group of five were found on the summit reservoir at the extreme northerly end of Berkeley, and on November 11th, numbers of them were observed on Lakes Phoenix and Lagunitas, one and three miles west, respectively, from Ross, Marin Co. It will be interesting to ascertain whether any of them are sojourning on Lake Merritt, Oakland, at the time of the January field trip.

An interesting feature of the day's trip was the swarm of Monarch butterflies, (Anosia plexippus), found on two eucalyptus trees a short distance westwardly from Stow Lake. Perhaps due to the low temperature, almost all of them were hanging to the trees with their wings folded, showing only the dusky cream-colored undersides, so that at first sight, they blended into the winter tones of the leaves and resembled bunches of fruit hanging from the slender branchlets.

Lunch was eaten in the Japanese tea garden and those remaining in the party adjourned to the Academy of Sciences to enjoy a very interesting lecture upon "The Shore Birds of the San Francisco Bay Region" by Mrs. G. Earle Kelly, Member of the Association.

Birds encountered were: Western and pied-bill grebes, glaucous-winged, western and California gulls; Mallard, baldpate, shoveller, pin-tail and canvasback; scaup, ring-necked duck, bufflehead, ruddy and coot, kildeer, California quail, red-tailed hawk, Anna hummer and black phoebe; Brewer blackbird, junco, Nuttall, song and fox sparrows; Audubon warbler, salt marsh yellowthroat, chickadee, bush-tit and hermit thrush. Thirty species.

Members in attendance: Miss Gunn: Mesdames Kelly, Kibbe and Smith; Messrs. Kibbe, Lastreto and Thomas. As guests: Miss M. S. Pettitt, Dr. E. Goodman and Scout Edmund Wagner. Seven members and three guests. During the early stages the party met Mr. Harold E. Hansen and five other scouts, similarly engaged.

AUDUBON ASSOCIATION OF THE PACIFIC

FOR THE STUDY AND THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS

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Meets second Thursday of each month, at 8:00 p.m., in Assembly Hall of San Francisco Public Library, Larkin and McAllister Streets.

Address Bulletin correspondence to President.

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